

Valley BV Children Enjoy Day Camp

A balavihar day camp was organized by CMLA for children in the Simi Valley and Northridge centers on Sunday, April 21 from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. Since it was the day after Ramanavami, the camp appropriately chose the theme “Values in the Ramayana” to focus on.

Twenty five children ranging in age from 5 to 17 attended and enjoyed the day camp which was held at Indian Community Center of Southern California in Simi Valley.

The camp conducted by trained sevaks and sevikas of CMLA Simi Valley and Northridge centers comprised of stories from the Ramayana, with emphasis on Lord Rama’s virtues and ideals, and the message imparted through these stories. The children were divided into two groups led by two teachers. The curriculum was tailored and simplified to teach young kids as well as taught at appropriate level for high school kids.

While the morning saw the morning packed with teaching and learning, the afternoon ushered in less formal and several fun-filled activities. Children decorated a picture frame which was used later for a picture of Lord Rama and then used for the Rama puja that followed. Children also had yoga and sports activities, and learned chanting and bhajans. During these activities, children worked as a team, bonded together and enjoyed the day thoroughly.

As Pujya Gurudev has said, “Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit.” One had to be there on that day to see these children’s lit up eyes.

At the end of the camp, Swami Ishwarananda arrived to grace the concluding session and was received with purna khumbam. Children chanted, performed Rama puja and received their certificates from Swamiji, and the camp concluded with arati. Immediately following the camp, Swamiji addressed the audience on the topic of “Karma and Dharma” that was fol-



lowed by question-answer session.

Families of participating families expressed their gratitude to Swamiji and BV coordinator Madhu Sharma for making the camp possible.

Love, Respect Shown for CMLA Moms



San Gabriel

The beautiful mothers of San Gabriel BV gathered to be acknowledged by their offspring. Acharya Mahadevji began the celebration of mothers by first paying salutations at the altar of the mother goddess.

Valley

The Valley balavihars celebrated Mothers Day & Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda Jayanthi on May 12. The children showed their respect for their mothers with worship with the chanting of Matra Stavnam and reverence to Pujya Gurudev was shown by the entire congregation reciting the ashtrotra in his praise. The pujas concluded with arati and prasad.

Tustin

At Rameshwaram, there was huge participation. While mothers sat on chairs ready to be acknowledged by their children, sons and daughters sat humbly at their feet and performed archana to them. Swamiji and Acharya Mahadevji offered simple messages of love and honor for the mother which the children listened to with rapt attention. Balvihar children also enacted short plays in glory of them mother. Fathers were not far behind in showing their respect either. While their cooking large batches of food and serving the lunch provided moments of mirth, it was also deeply appreciated by moms who were touched by the entire event.



Jugalbandi Has Artistes In Perfect Sync

BY USHA SRIRAM

Kalanjali’s presentation of the Jugalbandi concert by Sikkil Mala Chandrashekhar on flute and Aupama Bhagawat on sitar on May 5 at Rameshwaram was well received by rasikas of both Carnatic and Hindustani music.

The evening started with a mellifluous offering of Ganesha Vandana on the flute subtly complemented by sitar.

Sikkil Mala’s rendition of Nagumo in Abheri a popular Thyagaraja Krithi was well complemented by Anupama on sitar in Yaman Kalyan.

The artists brought together the Carnatic and Hindustani streams of Indian music, weaving together the Ragam-Thanam-Pallavi in Keervani. The two soloists of two different instruments from different traditions were on an equal footing, complementing each other, yet playfully competing with each other to keep the interest of the audience.



The accompanying percussionists on mridangam and tabla further enhanced the concert. Nirmal Narayanan and Abhiman Kaushal are local artists who are well known for the mastery of their instruments.

The concert concluded with both artists playing together, Vaishnava Janathao, the thillana - a tribute to the violin maestro late Lalgudi G Jayaraman and a final piece in Raag Sindhubairavi.

It was hard to believe that it was only the artistes second jugalbandi concert, they complemented each other with such ease!

New Families of 2012-2013 Have Satsang with Swamiji

By B. JAYARAMAN

Back in November 2012, Swami Ishwarananda specially organized Sadhana Sevaka groups (six groups each consisting of about 15 families) to help the new Balavihar families get better acquainted with Chinmaya Mission. Sevakas – mentor volunteers - exerted a lot of effort and time to conduct monthly sessions to benefit these families. During these monthly meetings each group of about 15 families individually watched the DVD “Logic of Spirituality” by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and discussed the basic concepts of Vedanta. Many of the families who were regular at these meetings said they did find it extremely helpful and enlightening.

On May 18, 2013, near the end of the balavihar year, Chinmaya Rameshwaram sevaks organized a meeting combining all



the new families. This meeting included a satsang with Swamiji. During this satsang Swamiji stressed how we all go about lives in our own mundane ways without connecting with others. He insisted on the importance of connecting with the like minded for our own spiritual growth and wisdom.

He also indicated a long term plan for the benefit of all families by which they can progress in their spiritual growth year by year learning vedanta as well as sadhanas to progress in their individual lives. The meeting concluded with refreshments.

Budding Artists and Writers at CMLA....

One of the attractions of the Ramanavami celebrations held by CMLA each year are essay and art competitions. We feature here some of the winners.

My Views on Hinduism

BY NEAL SHARMA, 7TH GRADE

First Prize (5 to 8th grade category)

Hinduism is an undeniably enlightening religion. To me, it is like a lifestyle and I always joyfully sing, praising the Lord and exemplifying my undying devotion for Him. Hinduism positively impacts my life by introducing how to live virtuously, while having fun at the same time. Festivals such as Holi and Deepavali are absolutely engrossing and I would have only been able to have participated under Hinduism.

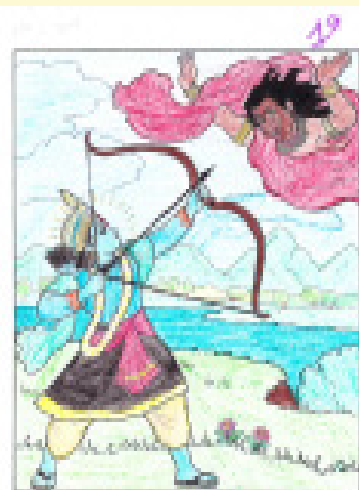
Hinduism also offers many ways to live morally to later attain moksha and reach Bhagavan. Qualities such as honesty and non-suffering are portrayed centrally throughout stories which present a path of upright living. These values also increase the composure of the mind as one becomes closer to Nirvana and the Ultimate Truth.

The tales spun and mythology chronicled by the great writers of the past when India was feudalistic and fanciful with magic powers, actually have a deeper hidden meaning. Beyond the fanciful entertainment the readers receive, there is an underlying message that prompts readers to practice certain values and become better people.

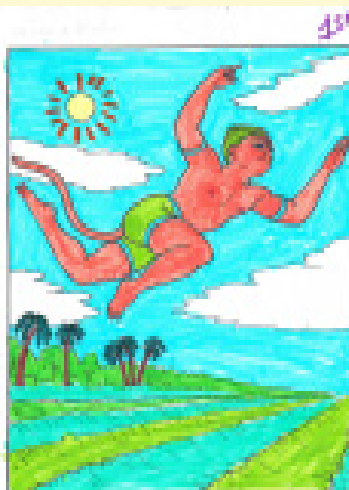
Hinduism also promotes followers to achieve their goals in life. By incorporating them in historical stories, the audience is compelled to emulate the story’s protagonist and his achievements to inspire them to make their aspirations a reality.

Lastly, Hinduism gives reason for followers to strive in life. As a result of its incentives of living purely to later be awarded with entry to heaven’s paradise, devotees are inclined to live according to God’s will.

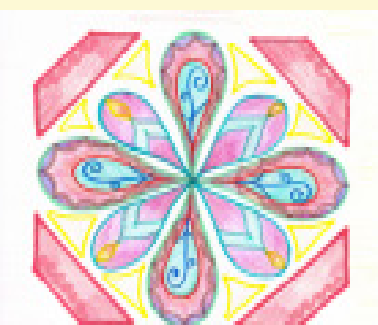
In conclusion, my perspective is that Hinduism is beneficial in my life and I have no qualms over it. Ultimately, Hinduism is the way to go!



3rd grader Apporva Koka won in the 1st-3rd grade category for coloring



Coloring by Dhriti Mangaraju – 1st prize in Kinder group



Rangoli drawing in the 4 to 6th grade category was won by Aditi Mukkara

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